

vatican news

Vatican 'Summit' Overplayed Yet Important

By Fr. Robert A. Graham, SJ

Vatican City [RNS] — Is Pope Paul about to launch a diplomatic offensive for justice and peace?

The world press thought it saw signs of this when it was learned that the papal representatives on service abroad

News Analysis — Nuncios, Pronuncios and Apostolic Delegates would meet in closed session at a seminary outside Rome in early September.

They called it a "Vatican Summit." The Pope would preside, the whole range of Vatican policy would be discussed in view of new needs and opportunities.

In vain, the Vatican Press Office explained that the alleged "summit" was just an informal get-together of the officials who had themselves asked on the occasion of Summer leaves home, to be able to meet their colleagues and with their

Father Graham is author of the prize-winning study, *Vatican Diplomacy*, published in 1959 by Princeton University Press. He is at present collaborating in the publication of the correspondence of the Vatican Secretariat of State during World War II, of which seven volumes have already appeared.

superiors for an exchange of views on practical matters.

As it turned out, hardly more than 30 of the nearly 100 Vatican diplomats appeared. The Pope did not preside but attended for an hour one afternoon, at which time he gave them an informal discourse. None of the major Vatican posts were represented, outside of Italy. The Nuncios of Germany, France, and Belgium were missing; also conspicuous by their absence were the Apostolic Delegates in Washington and London.

It was hardly a command performance, much less a summit.

It is "too bad the world press bungled the occasion. Vatican diplomacy after a period of de-emphasis is finding a new style and new objectives. At the Vatican Council this institution

was criticized as triumphalistic and political.

Bishops complained that the papal representatives interfered in their legitimate jurisdiction and acted as a screen rather than as a channel of communications between themselves and the Pope. Could not the local Churches deal with whatever governmental problems arose in their country? Besides, the whole system — it was argued — is unevangelical.

Obviously, Pope Paul then, as now, did not believe these criticisms were sufficient to justify scrapping a well-tryed and useful instrument of international action. After some changes in structure and style, the papal diplomacy began to grow both in numbers and in the range of its objectives.

In his remarks to the Nuncios

and Delegates, Pope Paul seemed to reaffirm, against criticism, his support of their role.

"You represent our person, as the successor of Peter. You are the direct reflection of our function, you enlarge the circle of our possibilities and contribute to the widening of our activities and our presence among men."

With apparent reference to the question of their relations to the local Churches, he said further that this relationship is not only opportune but necessary. Through them, he said, the Pope is near to his brothers in the episcopate. They are a manifestation of collegiality and of the catholicity of the Catholic Church.

And in apparent reference to the Nuncios function as diplomats accredited to governments, he declared that they are particularly valid and legitimate instruments to promote and defend divine and human rights. Theirs, he said, is an authentic apostolate and an evangelical presence.

On the recent record, Pope

Paul is not about to close up Vatican Diplomacy. Academic arguments to the contrary and notwithstanding, circumstances have given it a natural impetus. One of these is the multiplication of small new states in the Third World who make it a point to create official relations with the Holy See.

Already, in some instances, this has proved a valuable channel for resolving Church-State conflicts in some of these countries.

But more important is the changed attitude of the international community itself. The Holy See is invited, and willingly accepts, to take part in important international conferences on the theme of peace.

The most recent, and most significant of these cases was the Holy See's participation, as a full-fledged member with voting rights, in the conference on Security and European Cooperation at Helsinki, last July.

All the signs point to widening possibilities of action for Vatican diplomacy in the fight for justice and peace.



Neighborhood children in newly-opened Sebastian Park.

Now It's Sebastian Park

The City of Rocheser has named a park after Father

Sebastian Contegiacomo, pastor of Most Precious Blood Church for some 36 years.

Only a Pawn?

Capetown [RNS] — When chess prizes were distributed at Natal all the participants attended except one of the champions.

G. Holmes, who won the open chess title, was given his award privately before the functions began.

Presentations and other ceremonies were held at the Grayville race track. Holmes could not participate.

Organizers of the tournament forgot to apply to the Department of Community Development for a permit covering his attendance.

Holmes is black.

Under construction two years, the \$493,000 park covers 5.5 acres in the middle of the residential section of the Mt. Read-Emerson Urban Renewal Project. It is bounded generally by Stenson Street, Polaris Street, Emerson Street and Lexington Avenue.

The park provides two lighted tennis courts; an athletic field for baseball, softball, soccer and football; an extensive children's play area with a variety of creative and imaginative equipment for many different kinds of play and exercise; two full-size lighted basketball courts; picnic areas and two picnic shelters, one of which is enclosed and heated for winter activities.

Priest Quits Over 'Visit' Policy

By PAT PETRASKE

The recently established policy of social visits at St. Bonaventure University in Olean has prompted Franciscan Father Charles F. Adams, associate professor of chemistry, to leave the university in "personal protest."

Father Adams is a native of Rochester, has local relatives and customarily assists in city parishes during college vacations. He has been reassigned to parish work in Croghan, Lewis County.

In a letter sent to a dozen western New York newspapers, Father Adams stated, "The visiting of boys and girls in bedrooms constitutes, at best, a serious occasion of sin, and therefore, is contrary to established principles of Catholic morality."

The university president, Father Damian McElrath, called Father Adams' action "less than gracious since he had never communicated to me his sentiments." The public relations director, Jack Ritzenthaler, added that "no pros or cons" have been received from the other priests concerning the new policy.

Social visiting, formerly called intervisitation, is to be tried out this semester on six weekends, plus one weekday per month. Allowing this, Father Damian reversed a 1972 decision against intervisitation made by Father Reginald Redlon, former president. Father Adams said that Father Redlon's decision had been supported by all but three of the Franciscan priests and brothers of the apostolate and by a vote of the Board of Trustees.

Frater Daniel Kenna, OFM, vice president for student affairs, explained that the visiting program had been scheduled after "consulting with many members of the university community and with representatives from Catholic University of America . . . which is supported by the bishops of the United States. He stressed that it is not "an open dorm policy" but the "first time that the university has embarked on a controlled program."

At a meeting of the board of trustees in May a proposal to allow intervisiting was denied. Brother Kenna added, "The board did support the president's effort

to operate within the framework of last year's student handbook in seeking a solution to the question of social visits."

He maintained that the board of trustees recognized that any solution must balance the social needs with legitimate desires for privacy and study and that "any solution must be faithful to

Poland Leads Europe in Priest Vocations

Aachen, West Germany [RNS] — Father Wilhelm Wissing, president of the Roman Catholic bishops' German Missionary Organization (MISSIO) who returned here after a 10-day tour of Poland, said there are more men entering the priesthood in Poland than in any other European country.

The 55-year-old priest, who once headed the German Catholic youth movement and served as liaison between the German bishops' conference and the Bonn government, told newsmen that 90 per cent of the Polish children are baptized Catholics and Church services are overcrowded.

Father Wissing also said that 80 to 90 per cent of children in elementary schools in Poland take part in voluntary religious instruction, although it must take place after school hours and off school premises.

Conceding that there is still "considerable tension" between the Catholic Church and the Communist government in Poland, Father Wissing said the "situation is certainly better than in other parts of Eastern Europe."

Political Advertisement

Bonaventure's nature as Franciscan and Catholic."

In previous years social visits were allowed on certain weekends, as for Valentine's Day, Junior Prom and military ball.

Under the new policy, visitors must sign in and leave their identification cards with the student resident assistants on duty. The dorms are open until midnight on Friday and 1 a.m. on Saturday.

Two committees have been established to evaluate the program. A board comprising members of residence hall councils and the deans of men and women meets each week to discuss problems and developing attitudes toward the policy. Another committee of alumni, parents, faculty and students will evaluate the program "in order to incorporate its best feature into student life," Frater Kenna said.

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